

Remarks

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Thus, the specification and drawings have been amended in response to the objections to the drawings in items 1 and 2 on page 2 of the Office Action, as a result of which these objections have been rendered moot. The corrected drawings are attached to the paper entitled SUBMISSION OF REPLACEMENT DRAWINGS filed concurrently herewith.

The specification has been further amended as suggested by the Examiner in item 3, thus rendering the objection to the disclosure moot.

Claims 1-5 have been cancelled, thus rendering moot the objection to claims 1 and 3 in item 4, as well as the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in items 6-8.

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 12, 13, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Inoue et al. (US '426), as applied to the claims remaining after entry of the foregoing amendments, is respectfully traversed.

The effective date of this reference as prior art is its U.S. filing date of October 24, 2001. On the other hand, the two Japanese priority applications on which the present U.S. application is based were filed November 28, 2000 and February 9, 2001. Therefore, Applicants can overcome the use of the US '426 reference as prior art by obtaining the benefit of the priority dates. In this regard, verified English translations of both priority applications are submitted herewith, it being noted that certified copies of the priority applications are already of record in the parent application, as acknowledged by the Examiner.

In view of these translations of the priority applications, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of the claims as being anticipated by Inoue et al. (US '426) should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 12-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue et al. (US '838) is respectfully traversed.


As indicated by the Examiner, this reference discloses a coating film having a thickness of **5 to 200 μm** , preferably 10 to 50 μm (column 4, lines 60-62). As indicated by amended claim 12, the thickness of the Ni-B alloy film has now been limited to 10 to 100 nm, which is equal to **0.01 to 0.1 μm** . Thus, the range of the film thickness as recited in claim 12 is clearly distinct from the thickness of the coating film in Inoue et al. Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 12 and the claims dependent thereon are clearly patentable over this reference.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of the grounds of objection and rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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FIG. 14

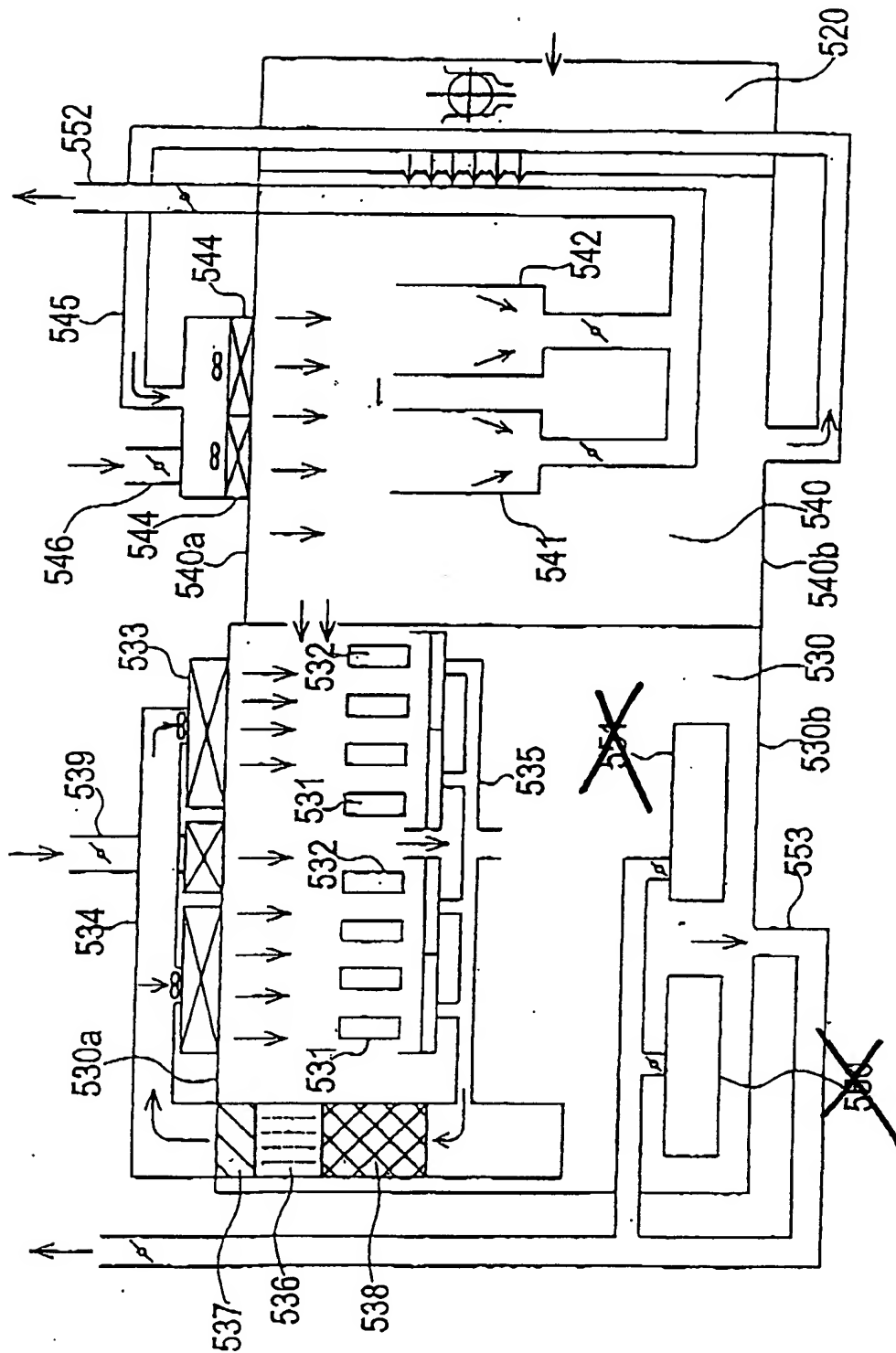


FIG. 18

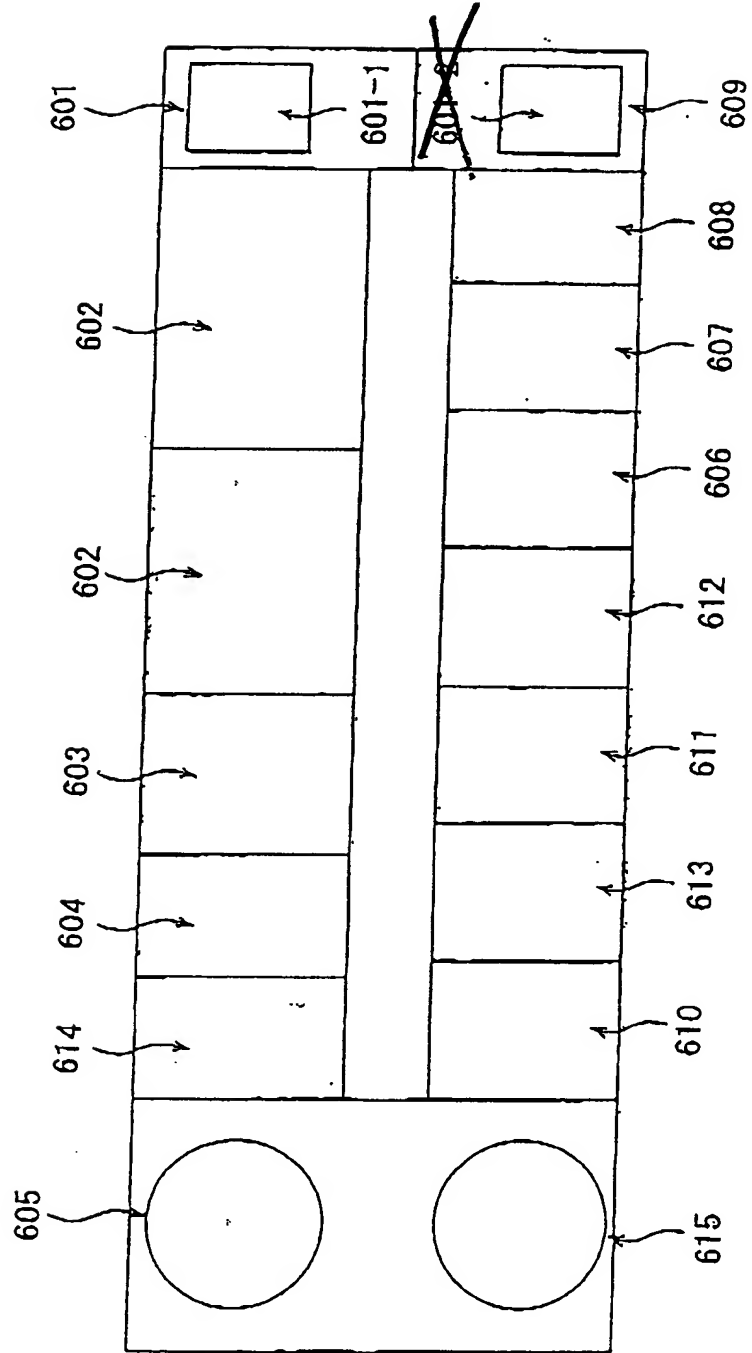


FIG. 25

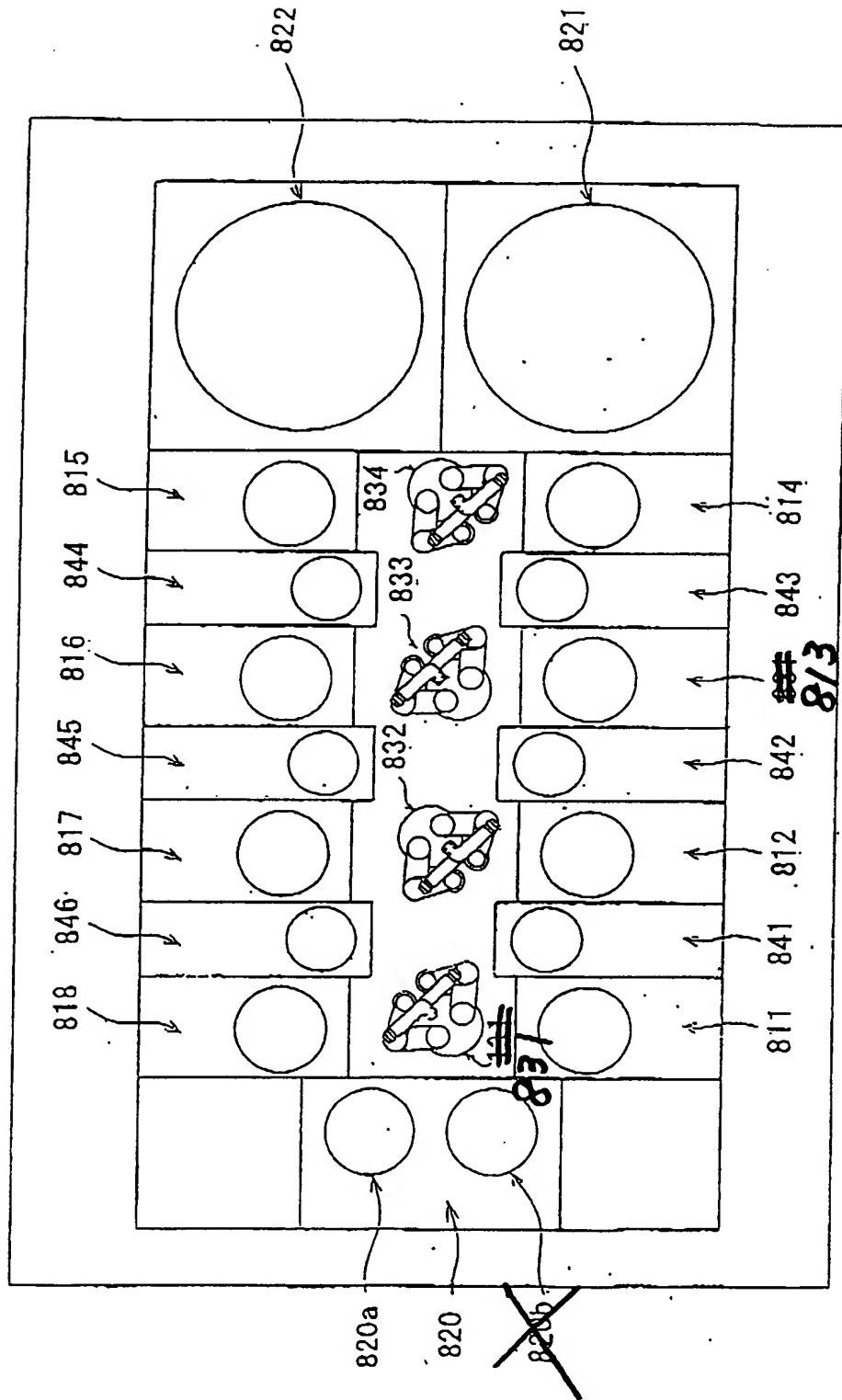


FIG. 27

